



## Beginning Finnish Research: A Case Study

### Objective:

The objective of this lesson is to teach basic skills using select Finnish parish records.

### Finnish Parish Records

The first records you will use in researching your Finnish ancestors are records made in the parishes they lived in. The parish records include:

Birth	syntyneet, födde
Marriage	vihityt, vigde
Death	kuolleet, döde
Communion Books	rippikirjat, husförhörslangd

Birth, marriage and death records are primary sources for information giving names, dates, and places for event of births, marriages and deaths.

These records were initially kept in Swedish while Finland was part of Sweden. When Finnish became an official language in 1863 during Russia's rule of Finland some parishes began to keep their records in Finnish. By 1880 most parish records were written in Finnish. Because the repositories you will search list records by their Finnish terms, we are going to use the Finnish terms for this lesson.

### What is Usually Included on Syntyneet, Vihityt, Kuolleet and Rippikirjat

#### Syntyneet

- Names of child and parents
- Baptism date and often the birth date
- Child's legitimacy or illegitimacy
- Father's occupation
- Family's residence
- Names of Godparents and witnesses
- Sometimes death information if child died young
- Street name or address if family lived in large city

#### Vihityt

- Names of the groom and bride
- Date of marriage
- Residence of groom and bride before marriage
- Occupations of groom and bride

- Whether single or widowed
- Names of witnesses and their residences; they might be the parents
- Dates on which the intention of marriage were announced

#### Kuolleet

- Name of deceased
- Burial date
- Often the death date
- Age at death
- Residence
- Cause of death

#### Rippikirjat

Rippikirjat are called many things besides Rippikirjat. You may see these records listed as Kommunionböcker, Husförhörslangd, Communion Books, Clerical Survey, Household Exam and Church Census.

Every year the parish priest recorded a parishioner's knowledge and understanding of the Lutheran religion. He also recorded whether individuals could read, and the dates they took communion.

Each book generally covers five to ten years, for example: 1861-1870, 1871-1880 and so on.

Rippikirjat are secondary sources for birth dates and places, marriage dates, and death dates.

These records also show moving patterns of parish residents.

Remarks may also be written in these records indicating whether an individual was sickly, deaf or blind.

In doing Finnish research it is important to use Rippikirjat as a tool in gathering your ancestral families' information. You must "always confirm" any information you collect in Rippikirjat using the Syntyneet, Vihityt and Kuolleet parish records.

It is important to collect "every" Rippikirjat for a given family.